

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO PRIORITY

INFO AMEMBASSY ROME PRIORITY

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EXDIS

E.O. 11652:XGDS-1

TAGS: PGOV, CI

SUBJECT LETELIER/MOFFITT ASSASSINATION CASE: LEIGHTON
CONNECTION

1. ITALIAN EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON, NORMALLY THROUGH
COUNSELOR BERTINETTO, HAS MAINTAINED COMMUNICATION WITH
CHILE DESK OVER LAST YEAR ON SUCH SUBJECTS AS THE GON-
ZALEZ ASYLUM MATTER AND CHILEAN POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS.
SINCE EARLY 1978 AND WITH INCREASED PRESS NOTICE OF
LETELIER/MOFFITT ASSASSINATION CASE, ITALIANS HAVE SHOWN
DETAILED INTEREST IN PROGRESS OF INVESTIGATION.

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2. SEVERAL WEEKS AGO, CHILE DESK OFFICER ASKED BERTINETTO
INFORMALLY IF ITALIAN GOVERNMENT HAD REACHED ANY CONCLU-
SIONS IN ITS INVESTIGATION OF THE ATTEMPT ON THE LIFE OF
CHILEAN CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC LEADER BERNARDO LEIGHTON
(AND WIFE) IN ROME IN 1975. BERTINETTO PROFESSED IGNO-
RANCE, AND OFFERED TO CHECK WITH ROME FOR INFORMATION ON

THE STATUS OF THE CASE.

3. HE TOLD CHILE DESK AUGUST 8 THAT ROME HAS INFORMED HIM THAT "THE INQUIRY IS DORMANT - NOT ACTIVE", AND THAT ROME WILL "SEND MORE INFORMATION". ACCORDING TO BERTINETTO, ROME HAD A REPORT FROM ITS EMBASSY IN

SANTIAGO THAT MICHAEL TOWNLEY INFORMED U.S. AUTHORITIES DURING HIS INTERROGATIONS AFTER BEING EXPELLED INTO U.S. CUSTODY THAT THE LEIGHTON ATTEMPT IN ROME WAS A DINA (CHILEAN SECRET POLICE) OPERATION CARRIED OUT BY PERSONNEL OF THE CHILEAN CARABINEROS (NATIONAL UNIFORMED POLICE). THE GOC TOLD GOI THAT IN 1975 IT "REPUDIATED" THE LEIGHTON ATTEMPT AND DENIED ANY RESPONSIBILITY.

4. BERTINETTO ASKED SPECIFICALLY IF THE ATTEMPT ON LEIGHTON IN ITALY WOULD COME UP IN THE LETELIER/MOFFITT TRIAL. CHILE DESK OFFICER STATED HE DID NOT KNOW WHAT MIGHT OR MIGHT NOT EMERGE IN THE TRIAL, THIS BEING A MATTER FOR DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE, NOT STATE. HE DID NOTE HIS UNDERSTANDING, AS HAD BEEN STATED IN PRESS REPORTS, THAT U.S. INVESTIGATORS WERE NOT QUESTIONING TOWNLEY ON CHILEAN INTELLIGENCE OPERATIONS OTHER THAN THOSE DIRECTLY INVOLVING THE U.S.

5. BERTINETTO OFFERED HESITANT COMMENT THAT PERHAPS GOI
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MIGHT HAVE TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT THE LEIGHTON INQUIRY.

6. NO ACTION IS REQUIRED OF ADDRESSEES. VANCE

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